Study Unit

Decorating Today

By

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About the Author

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Preview

Welcome to the world of interior decorating. In this study unit, you'll be introduced to the field of professional decorating. You'll learn about employment opportunities in the field and the characteristics of a successful decorator. You'll analyze your abilities to find your strongest area of expertise. You'll learn how to identify and interview your clients. And you'll start building your decorating skills.

When you complete this study unit, you'll be able to

- Identify historical factors that affect decorating
- Compare and contrast interior decorators and interior designers
- Explain interviewing techniques to determine the needs of potential clients
- Discuss characteristics of different types of clients
- Identify employment opportunities in the field of interior decorating
- Identify different specialty areas in decorating
- Recognize ways to gain experience in the field of decorating

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Color is an extremely integral part of interior decorating. Therefore, as you work through your program, be sure to study the photos and illustrations in their color format, available as PDFs. To access the PDFs, log on to the Penn Foster Web site and click on **My Courses.** Then, click on the open-book icon next to the unit you're studying.

Decorating Today

THE INTERIOR DECORATING PROFESSION

The profession of interior decorating is rapidly expanding and becoming increasingly exciting. Depending on your goals, you may decide to begin a decorating business of your own, or you may prefer to work for someone else. In either case, you're on the road to achieving that goal.

As an interior decorator, you'll regularly work with clients (Figure 1). You'll help them identify their style, and then you'll develop a decorating plan in that style to suit their

FIGURE 1—Working with clients to solve their decorating problems is a rewarding part of an interior decorator's job.

personalities and budgets. To do this, you should be familiar with the history of decorating so you can find examples of good design. You should also be familiar with current styles, the climate in which your clients live, and the available materials. It's your job to understand the factors that influence decorating. You can then develop your talent for a profitable and deeply satisfying career.

The Influence of History on Interior Decorating

Each historic period is characterized by a definite style of architecture, art, furniture, and fashion. The preferences of influential leaders and the worldview of the day influence the style of the time. Historically, families of great wealth financially supported the arts and appreciated their beauty. As a result, society looked to the upper class to establish styles and trends. However, even technology and inventions can change the designs used in buildings and furniture. In fact, society, politics, religion, industry, travel, and technology all have an influence on decorating style.

Interior decorators use the principles of design to create something of beauty. When you begin to work in this field, you'll be doing the same. As you proceed through this program, you'll learn how to use current and historical designs to create environments that are both functional and beautiful. For example, consider the elements of Asian decorative art, as shown in Figure 2. This style continues to be a significant element in many contemporary interiors.

We can trace this Asian influence to its origins many centuries ago. Marco Polo, the thirteenth-century traveler, brought the influence of Asia to Europe. His treasures created enthusiasm for home decoration. The painted Chinese screens, Japanese watercolors, and carved teakwood furniture had great appeal in European markets, and their timeless designs still appeal to many today.

FIGURE 2—The decorating elements in this photo illustrate the influence of Asian culture on decorating. (Reprinted with permission from Pearson Co., a division of Lane)

In addition to this example, many other historical periods and events continue to have an influence on decorating today:

- Egyptian and Asian periods
- Grecian and Roman periods
- Middle Ages
- Crusades
- Renaissance
- Reigns of French kings
- Colonial period
- Post–Revolutionary War period
- Modern period

Although styles in decorating continue to evolve, these and other periods in history continue to affect the field of interior decorating. The styles developed throughout the ages are still alive today. Throughout time, we've preserved the structures that illustrate the best designs of a period. Decorators look to these designs for inspiration.

And homes have changed over the years as well. The initial purpose of homes was simply to protect people from the elements. In later times, homes also provided a place for relaxation and enjoyment. Today, homes express who their owners are and what they like.

Where It All Began

History certainly has had a significant effect on interior decorating, but the reverse is also true. That is, decorating itself has often had an important effect on history. According to Wikipedia, the earliest career in interior decoration began—as you might imagine—in Paris.

In the eighteenth century, the guild system in Paris prohibited a craftsman from working in a field if that person had not completed a formal apprenticeship. Anyone authorized to work in a field was known as a *marchand-mercier* (a "merchant of goods"). This system created a field of specialists. For example, an architect or painter who wanted to decorate a room in a Baroque style had to hire a *marchand-mercier* who was authorized as an expert at creating rooms in that period. By the 1830s, interior decorators had become so influential that they were single-handedly responsible for reviving Gothic and Rococo styles.

Job Descriptions: Decorators and Designers

A distinct difference exists between interior decorators and interior designers.

Interior Decorators

Interior decorators are trained professionals who combine colors, textures, and patterns to create pleasing arrangements. They have some basic training in color theory, and they also possess knowledge of the function of space, furniture styles, and the history of decorating. Successful decorators can communicate these ideas to their clients.

Professionally trained interior decorators can work as self-employed consultants on either a part-time or full-time basis. Either of these options can lead to complete decorating jobs for residential and commercial projects. Interior decorators may also work for retail businesses and custom decorating services. In this capacity, they find and sell products that meet their clients' needs. Their employer determines their contribution to the organization. Income is derived from base pay, plus commission. Decorators can also choose to specialize in one or more aspects of decorating (for example, window treatments).

Interior Designers

Interior designers are also trained professionals. They have a strong background in art, interior design, space planning, and business skills. Interior designers prepare drawings and specifications for contractors and architects. Most often, interior designers work for or own a design firm.

Figure 3 shows the differences between the activities performed by decorators and designers.

Educational Background: Decorators and Designers

Interior Decorators

Interior decorators can be educated through an accredited distance learning program or a college-level certificate of interior decorating program.

If a decorator is hired as a consultant at a furniture showroom, the showroom may have a training program to teach the decorator how to work with clients. The showroom may also train the decorator in product knowledge and selling skills within the store. The store may also pay for outside training in decorating, design elements, and principles of design. In the United States and Canada, interior decorators are exempt from state licensing.

INTERIOR DESIGNER	INTERIOR DECORATOR
Understands and uses the elements and principles of design	Understands and uses the elements and principles of decorating
Prepares working drawings and specifications for • Interior construction • Materials • Finishes • Furnishings • Fixtures (including lighting plans)	Prepares scaled furniture floor plans and specifications for • Furniture • Flooring (carpet, tile, wood, and so on) • Fabrics • Finishes • Lamps and accessories
Prepares and administers bids and contracts	Prepares proposals and letters of agreement
Acts as clients' agent	Acts as clients' agent
Designs space to make it functional yet durable, aesthetic, safe, and healthy	Decorates space to make it functional and durable, aesthetic, safe, and healthy
Researches and solves problems related to the function of the interior environment	Analyzes clients' needs and makes recommendations
Creates designs in compliance with interior construction and building codes	Selects products to meet clients' needs
Analyzes clients' needs, goals, lifestyles, and safety requirements	Arranges for fabrication, delivery, and installation
Designs custom-made products and furnishings	Analyzes clients' needs, goals, lifestyles, and safety requirements
Creates designs for residences, commercial buildings, hospitals, and even yachts	Specifies ready-made products and furnishings
Works with contractors and unions	Prepares interior decorations for residences, commercial buildings, hospitals, and yachts
Must work within regulations and liabilities	Works with contractors, architects, and trade suppliers

FIGURE 3—Job Descriptions of Designers and Decorators

Interior decorators can become professional members of Certified Interior Decorators International (C.I.D.). This organization is the only certifying and membership body for professionally trained and tested interior decorators. C.I.D. is also dedicated to the development of interior decorators. Its members are recognized professionals in the industry and are accepted by trade showrooms, where they receive the same respect and trade discounts as interior designers. Members also benefit from advertising on their behalf in national decorating magazines. Membership in this organization will go a long way in establishing yourself as a professional.

To become a professional member of C.I.D., you must complete three steps:

1. Successfully complete a C.I.D.-approved interior decorating program
2. Pass the C.I.D. entrance examination
3. Join as a C.I.D. professional member

Membership in C.I.D. is an indication to your clients that you're a professional in the field of interior decorating.

C.I.D. charges a fee for both the examination and the membership. Professionals must maintain membership to be considered certified. For more information on C.I.D., visit their Web site at **http://www.cidinternational.org.** If you plan to pursue a career in interior decorating, membership in C.I.D. is something you should consider seriously.

Interior Designers

Interior designers attend a four- or five-year college program. This education emphasizes architectural interior design and the legal and business aspects of the profession.

Interior designers work closely with building contractors, architects, plumbing and heating contractors, electricians, and various subcontractors. Knowledge of residential and commercial building codes is helpful when working with these professionals. While interior decorators plan and furnish finished spaces, interior designers often define these spaces. In the world of interior design, *defining* means planning space, developing lighting arrangements, and preparing architectural renovations.

In most areas, designers must also be licensed by the state or province in which they work. The National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) offers a national test for design certification. This test is the standard for licensing. Interior designers are eligible to take this exam after completing certain educational requirements and after years of experience in the field.

Designers who pass the NCIDQ exam are then qualified for professional membership in the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID). ASID also allows allied membership for those who aren't yet qualified for full professional membership. Many states who license have allowed grandfathering based on practical experience rather than educational requirements.

Figure 4 compares the educational requirements and professional affiliations of designers and decorators.

Decorating—Displaying Clients' Personalities

Your future clients will want a home environment that fits their lifestyles and displays their personalities. However, the choices available are often overwhelming. That is, so many different styles are available at a wide range of prices. Clients want a decorator to assist them in getting the look they want at a reasonable price.

Most clients can see only one item at a time. As a decorator, you must help them to view each item as part of a total picture. At the same time, you must keep your clients focused and get the job done right the first time.

Today, decorators are most in demand when people move into new homes and when they relocate to different homes. When people move into new homes, they want them to look like home quickly. And they want the decor to be coordinated—that is, to blend together well. When people are moving from one home to another, they need help deciding what to take with them and what to replace. They also may need help preparing or staging their home for sale.

INTERIOR DESIGNER	INTERIOR DECORATOR
Education	
College-level degree Four to five years and a minimum of 45 credits in design	Distance education courses Workshops Seminars One- or two-year certification programs *The above programs must be accredited by Certified Interior Decorators International, Inc.
College degree must include courses in	**Education must include training in**
Textiles Color theory Design Furniture placement and space planning Furniture history and styles Architectural design	Textiles Color theory Design Furniture placement Furniture history and styles
Interior designers must meet one of the following requirements:	**Interior decorators must**
Master's degree and two years of design experience Bachelor's degree and two years of design experience Architect registration and two years of design experience Three-year certificate and three years of design experience Two-year associate degree and two years of design experience Six years of full-time work in design	Complete a C.I.D.-approved program Achieve a passing score on the C.I.D. entrance exam
Professional Organizations	
National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) Council of Federal Interior Designers (CFID) Interior Designers of Canada (IDC) Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC) International Interior Design Association (IIDA) National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA)	Certified Interior Decorators International (C.I.D.) *(Continued)*

FIGURE 4—Educational Requirements for Interior Designers and Decorators

INTERIOR DESIGNER	INTERIOR DECORATOR
Licensing	
Interior designers must pass the NCIDQ exam, and many states and provinces require that they be licensed.	Licensing isn't required for interior decorators.
Employment Opportunities	
Residential and commercial designing Employment in design firms and architectural firms Kitchen designing Consulting	Residential and hospitality decorating Furniture sales Specialization (for example window treatments or upholstery) Consulting
Income Possibilities	
Salary (employment at design firm) Hourly fee Percentage of project cost Salary plus commission Cost plus	Commission Hourly fee Base salary plus commission (retail sales) Cost plus

FIGURE 4—Continued

Interior Decorating Clients

Before you can begin to prepare an interior decorating project, you must have a client. For a beginning decorator, the prospect of attracting clients can be frightening.

If you start your own decorating business, you should know that it takes time to build up a clientele. You must focus your marketing and advertising to make the public aware of your services and thus attract clients.

If you're hired by an existing business with an established client base, the business will probably provide you with *leads*—the names, addresses, and phone numbers of interested potential clients.

A *client* is any person who has a final say in the decorating decision—whether that decision is related to the style of furniture, the color of the drapes, or the cost. It's important

that you interview all decision makers involved in a project. And make sure they're present when decisions are made and costs are determined.

Each client is unique (Figure 5), but you'll discover that they fall into general categories. For instance, here are some examples of different personality types and their needs:

- Friendly clients need personal attention and honesty.
- Aggressive clients require respect and admiration.
- Conservative clients work well with facts and figures.

As you work in the field of interior decorating, you'll learn more about personality types and how to handle them. You'll learn to look for the personality signs in your first interview. These signs will be clues to help you identify each client's style, outlook, and decision-making ability.

FIGURE 5—Although each client is different, you'll discover some similarities among personality types.

Developing a Portfolio

It's never too early to start a portfolio of your interior decorating work. A *portfolio* is a collection of your completed work, including all documents and information that give clients a reason to hire you. Possibly the most important parts of any interior decorating portfolio are photographs. Be sure you take pictures before you begin a job and then after you've completed the decorating. As a beginner, you can include work you've done for relatives, for friends, and even for yourself.

Here are some important items to include in your portfolio:

- Before and after photographs of jobs you've completed
- Floor plans
- Swatches for furniture and drapery fabrics, carpeting, and wallpaper
- Testimonials from satisfied customers

Above all, keep your portfolio neat. It represents your work to prospective clients.

Interviewing Prospective Clients

The first step in meeting your clients consists of an interview process. This process allows your prospective clients to discuss your work and to ask about the fees involved. In the first 10 minutes, clients will evaluate you according to these four important criteria:

- The way in which you greet them
- Your appearance
- Your poise and confidence
- Your credentials

Making a good first impression is essential in acquiring a client's business. During your initial interview (Figure 6), identify your client's expectations and make sure the client understands the information included in your *contract.* A contract is a general document that explains the payments, deliveries, and contracted work.

FIGURE 6—Your clients will learn a lot about you during your first interview.

You may also provide your clients with a *questionnaire.* You can develop your own questionnaire that allows clients to define what colors, styles, and needs they may have. Included in this questionnaire can be questions about the number of people who will be using the space and in what ways. For example, suppose the space you're decorating is a busy family room used by two parents, four teenagers, a large dog, and a cat. The family uses this space for eating, playing, and entertaining. For this project, you would need to choose colors and fabrics that can survive the active use of this room. A properly developed questionnaire would provide you with all of the information you need to decorate this family room.

On your questionnaire, be sure to ask about limitations regarding budget, space, and time. Also ask what, if any, decorating problems you may encounter. Knowing these limitations will help you to select products that are appropriate for each client.

At this point in the interview process, your job as a decorator is to make friends with the clients. Really listen to their needs, wants, and desires. Let them tell you how they want the room to look and feel.

After gathering the information from your prospective clients, you should "tell them your story." To do this, you can review your credentials, your portfolio, and any referral letters you've received.

This information helps to develop in your clients trust and confidence in your ability to handle their decorating needs.

Never think of your clients' style, personalities, and family members as limitations to your decorating plans. It's your job as a professional to work around obstacles and incorporate your clients' styles into your decorating plans.

Presenting Your Decorating Plan

After you've gathered the necessary information and you've developed a plan, you must then present the plan to your prospective client. Depending on the decorating job, your presentation may include

- A floor plan showing furniture, an area rug, lighting, and accessories
- A sketch of a window treatment with several fabric samples to choose from
- A piece of artwork with a choice of matting and frames

As you show your client each item in your plan, relate your choice to the information you gathered during the initial interview. In other words, emphasize why the choice best fits their needs, wants, and budget. Allow them to be a part of the decorating process. If you're working with more than one person, try to identify who will make the final decision. During this meeting, be prepared to give some estimates for the complete job.

Once you've made your presentation, allow the clients to ask questions. You should expect one or two objections, which are a natural reaction to a high-ticket sale. Be polite and answer their questions and objections as well as you can.

Finally, ask for the order. If a prospective client agrees and gives you a deposit to get the work started, that person then becomes a client. He or she signs a letter of agreement to buy either merchandise or your time. The deposit is your client's confidence that you'll do what you said you would.

You'll soon discover that it takes a great deal of time to develop a relationship with a new client. Once you've developed that relationship, however, you'll benefit each time that client asks you to do more projects. You'll both be comfortable because you already know each other's personality.

Before reading on about where interior decorators work, take time to complete *Self-Check 1.*

Self-Check 1

At the end of each section of *Decorating Today,* you'll be asked to pause and check your understanding of what you've just read by completing a "Self-Check" exercise. Answering these questions will help you review what you've studied so far. Please complete *Self-Check 1* now.

1. *True or False?* Interior decorators and interior designers perform the same type of work.

2. During an interview, what tool can you use to gather information from prospective clients?

   _____

   _____

3. What are some of the limitations you should learn about your clients before you begin to develop a plan for them?

   _____

   _____

Questions 4–6: Fill in the blanks for each of the following statements.

4. As a beginning interior decorator, an important part of your client group will be your family and _____.

5. A collection of completed work that includes samples, floor plans, and photographs is known as the decorator's _____.

6. A _____ is recognizable by a definite style of architecture, art, furniture, and fashion.

Check your answers with those on page 47.

WHERE DO INTERIOR DECORATORS WORK?

Qualified interior decorators work in a variety of positions. As you read this study unit, you'll realize many of the career opportunities available to you. For example, you may eventually work with other decorators in roles you may not currently associate with decorators. Consider a buyer for a major retail furniture store. What makes that person so knowledgeable about furniture? Perhaps that buyer has a background in decorating. Have you considered becoming a buyer?

Or what about a specialist in a particular area of decorating? Like most other businesses, interior decorating is becoming a business of specialists. There are specialists who do only window treatments, only kitchens, and other specialty areas. In the past, customers bought bedding in a department store. Now entire retail operations are devoted to bed and bath ensembles. Every one of them needs a qualified specialist to assist customers with their decorating questions. And that person may be an interior decorator.

As long as customers want to make personal statements in their homes, they'll continue to invest in interior decorating. Clients today are using decorators more often than ever before. And because average clients change their interiors once every seven years, a qualified decorator can expect to have countless opportunities assisting clients in creating new interiors.

In this section, you'll examine job opportunities in three separate areas: the retail environment, the trade-only industry, and independently owned businesses.

The Retail Environment

The *retail environment* consists of stores where individuals purchase food, clothing, shoes, appliances, furniture, and almost everything else they need. Decorators are an important part of the retail environment, where they work in many different capacities. At one time or another, you were probably assisted by a decorator in one of these stores.

Department stores employ decorators in a variety of roles. For example, they may help customers to select appropriate furniture, linens, draperies, carpeting, accessories, and other decorating items. Or decorators may work as buyers for department stores. In that capacity, decorators buy products for resale. For example, suppose you work in a large department store in the home furnishings division. You may be responsible for buying wallcovering collections, paint products, fabrics, curtains, bedding, and area rugs. Your responsibility may also include accessories and lamps, paintings and prints, and decorative tableware.

Decorators who are responsible for purchasing products make contacts with suppliers to determine the best

- Price for the product
- Warranty for the product
- Delivery on the product
- Reliability of the supplier's business

This position is a huge responsibility because the decorator is spending large sums of money. The best products must be passed on to the consumer. A decorator in this position must be well informed.

Furniture stores often hire and train decorators to assist clients in making selections. Decorators in this capacity build lasting relationships that keep clients coming back to their store. Furniture stores generally pay their decorators a small weekly salary, plus a commission on whatever they sell. Figure 7 illustrates a decorator working as a salesperson in a furniture store.

Custom decorating stores employ decorators to design window treatments, choose bedding, and select accessories that will be made for clients. The decorator develops designs and helps clients select fabric and hardware. The decorator then places the order and arranges for installation. Custom decorating includes bed ensembles, bath accessories, and anything made with fabric.

FIGURE 7—Furniture stores often employ decorators as sales personnel.

Wallcovering and paint stores employ decorators to assist clients in selecting the appropriate products. The product should meet the required function. It should also be just the right pattern and color to fulfill the client's desire. This area may include specialty finishes like stenciling, faux finishes, and stains.

Flooring stores offer another employment avenue for decorators. In flooring stores, decorators assist their clients in making choices that are both functional and beautiful. Decorators assist clients in selecting the appropriate product—carpet, tile, or wood—to meet the client's needs and budget.

Kitchen and bath stores employ decorators who know the best products available, the appropriate appliances, and styles and color trends. Decorators in this arena help customers coordinate color, style, and finishes.

Ceramic tile showrooms often hire decorators to explain and sell the various types of ceramic and marble products. The decorators often set up *vignettes* (small displays). Vignettes show consumers a variety of ways to use the products sold in the showroom. For example, a decorator may construct a

sample of a tile wall. A simple artistic display creates a way for customers to visualize what they can do with a product. Decorators may also be responsible for store window displays.

Artwork and accessories stores employ decorators who can create unique groupings of artwork for wall decorations. Decorators may also help clients to find the right art pieces to be displayed on shelves and tables. They'll locate just the right piece for their clients' taste.

Lighting stores employ decorators to help clients with style and function—both in renovation and new-home construction.

Professional interior decorators who work in any of these retail environments must have

- Product knowledge
- Design skills
- Knowledge of color theory
- Communication and selling skills
- A positive attitude

Clients want to work with professional decorators. They don't mind paying a little more when they realize decorators save them from making costly mistakes. Always remember that you and your ideas are part of what your clients are buying.

The Trade-Only Industry

The *trade-only industry* consists of the manufacturers that design and produce furnishings and sell them directly to builders, decorators, designers, retailers, and architects at 40 to 50 percent off the established retail prices. These lower prices allow customers to make a profit when they sell to consumers. The term *trade-only* means these manufacturers don't sell directly to the public. They sell only to people working in the trade. Businesses in the trade-only industry are called *suppliers.* Trade-only showrooms are usually located in major cities throughout the nation.

Interior decorators employed in the trade-only industry must make their products appear as appealing as possible. They may design displays of the products to entice buyers to make a purchase. Decorators in the trade-only industry must have a great deal of technical knowledge regarding their products since they're selling to individuals who understand the product.

Businesses in the trade-only industry use decorators because they're familiar with furniture, fabric, wallcoverings, and styles. Decorators also have experience working with the public, and they can determine the qualities of a product, such as durability and stain resistance. Decorators employed by the trade-only industry must understand the need for exciting, functional home products.

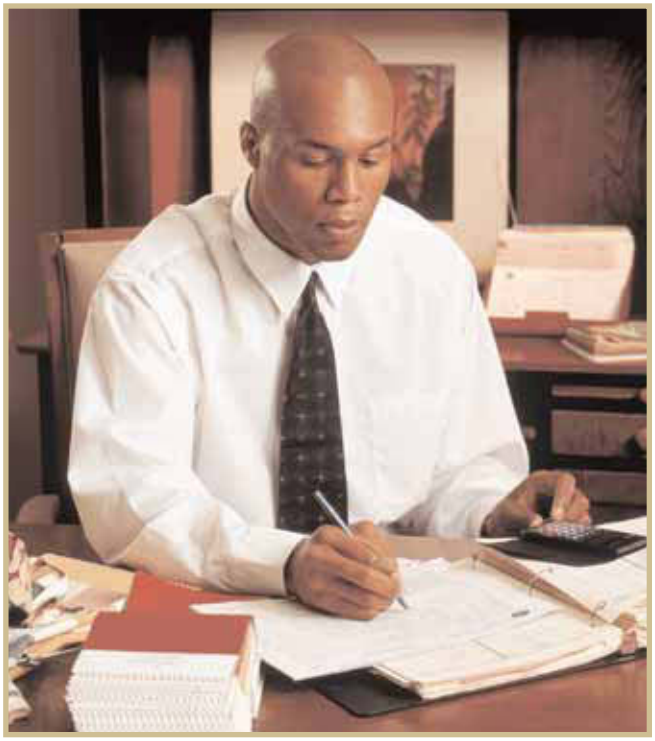

FIGURE 8—This decorator has worked hard to establish his own business.

Independently Owned Businesses

One of the most rewarding and most lucrative areas for interior decorators is owning a business (Figure 8). In fact, more than 75 percent of C.I.D. members are self-employed. However, establishing a decorating business means hard work, self-discipline, motivation, and a good business sense. The idea of owning a business can be very exciting.

As a self-employed interior decorator, you may choose to operate your business from your own home, or you may decide to open a decorating shop. Although you'll probably earn more money if you open a shop, interior decorators with home-based businesses can do very well for themselves.

To operate your own decorating business, you must acquire more than just decorating skills. You'll need to develop business skills so you can create

- A business plan
- A marketing plan
- Sales goals

Help for Small Businesses

Many small business management organizations provide assistance to individuals attempting to start a small business. One such organization is the Small Business Administration (SBA). According to their Web site (**http://www.sba.gov**), the purpose of the SBA is to "aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation." The SBA Web site also offers more than 25 free online courses for small business owners.

With today's double-income families, there are many potential customers available to ambitious interior decorators. For example, some such avenues are the *DIY (do-it-yourself) market, new-home construction,* and *decorating franchises.*

DIY market. A new trend that's becoming increasingly popular is the DIY market. Manufacturers see an advantage in teaching homeowners to save money and complete decorating projects themselves. This trend started with small remodeling projects. It's now moved into decorating (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9—Many homeowners are now doing much of their own remodeling and decorating.

To support this trend, magazines, books, programs, and videos present ideas, suggestions, and instructions on how-to projects. Remember that these outlets aren't giving full decorating knowledge. Therefore, customers may be able to plan and complete a small project themselves, but they call a decorator for help pulling it all together.

New-home construction. Many decorators seek work from individuals and families who are building new homes. They help clients select flooring, paint colors, and plumbing fixtures. They also assist in the selection of window

treatments, laminate colors, and wood stains. To find clients in this arena, try working through a building contractor who specializes in new homes. Or leave your cards at model homes. You may even volunteer to decorate a model home. If people visiting the home like what they see, they may give you a call when they need decorating help.

Franchises. Decorating franchises are also available for those interested in operating their own business. *Franchises* offer established systems for running a decorating business. However, when you operate a franchise, you must pay a *royalty* to the parent company. In other words, for every sale you make, you must pay part of your profit to the decorating company.

Before you go on to the next section of this study unit, please complete *Self-Check 2.*

Self-Check 2

Indicate whether each of the following statements is True or False.

_____ 1. A common employer of an interior decorator is a furniture store.

_____ 2. A decorator can't own a business.

_____ 3. Decorators may set up small displays called vignettes to feature products in retail or wholesale showrooms.

Fill in the blanks for each of the following statements.

4. A new area of decorating in which clients complete projects themselves is known as the _____ market.

5. The trade-only industry markets goods to _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.

6. The portion of profits that a decorating franchise pays to the parent company is known as a _____.

Check your answers with those on page 47.

ESTABLISHING YOUR PROFESSIONAL EDGE

The field of interior decorating is exciting and highly competitive. To compete in a world of home furnishings, you must be trained in all aspects of the industry. You should possess product knowledge, good communication and selling skills, and, of course, solid decorating skills. You must also be able to show clients how their finished projects will look.

At the same time, you must persuade clients to buy your products. As you gain experience as a decorator, you'll gradually develop a good business. You'll also begin to develop a professional philosophy that you should express in a written mission statement.

Let's examine these items separately and expand upon what a decorator needs in this competitive field.

Areas of Expertise: An Overview

To be successful in the field of interior decorating, you must have solid knowledge in the following areas of expertise:

- Product knowledge
- Communication, selling, and decorating skills
- Solid business practices
- A professional philosophy expressed as a mission statement

Product Knowledge

As an interior decorator, you must know what products are available, who sells them, how they're sold, and what their potential problems are.

As a decorator, you must have *product knowledge.* That is, you must be familiar with all of the products an interior decorator uses in the field, and you must be prepared to answer unexpected questions. It may sound overwhelming at first, but this knowledge comes gradually through working and training in the decorating industry.

As the decorating industry becomes increasingly specialized, careers will focus on individual decorating areas. For example, suppose you represent a firm selling aluminum window blinds. You'll need to know the type and weight of the aluminum used to manufacture the blinds. You should also know the best method to install, repair, and clean the product.

The degree of product knowledge you'll need depends on your specialty area (Figure 10). As with any other professional training, you'll learn the broad picture first and then the specific areas in more detail. As you work in the field on a daily basis, you'll become familiar with your products. You'll be able to anticipate consumer questions and be ready with the right answer.

FIGURE 10—If you decide to specialize in decorating bathrooms, you would have to become familiar with bathroom fixtures, bathroom lighting, tile, flooring, and other elements used to decorate a bathroom.

As you specialize in certain areas of decorating, you'll also become familiar with the manufacturers related to your specialty areas. You may work with only five or six manufacturers. You'll know the pros and cons of dealing with each of them. You'll learn their discounting methods, sample lines, and the integrity of their companies.

As you specialize, your product knowledge will become more extensive. You'll have the opportunity to attend manufacturer's shows and conventions. These shows display the most updated products in their lines. By specializing, you can become knowledgeable in several product lines and provide better service.

Communication Skills

As an interior decorator, you must be able to communicate your product knowledge, decorating ideas, and the finished image to your client. In other words, you must be able to explain what you know to your clients in a way that they can understand it. Use good, descriptive words to help clients visualize your images. Remember, however, that communication is a two-way process. You must also listen to what the client is saying (Figure 11).

Don't try to show off your knowledge by using interior decorating *jargon.* Jargon refers to the specialized vocabulary of a specific activity or group. For example, suppose you're speaking to a client about fabrics for draperies or upholstery. Don't just start referring to fabric names like brocade, chintz, and damask. Explain what each of these fabrics is like and discuss their strengths and weaknesses. Use what you learn as a means of educating your clients.

FIGURE 11—As an interior decorator, you must learn to listen carefully to your clients so you can create plans that suit their needs and wants.

Selling Skills

As a decorator, you're also a salesperson. The most creative and wonderful projects are useless unless someone wants to buy them. Only through the selling of your ideas will the actual decorating job take place. You must convince your clients that your ideas, products, and plans will best fit their needs. Therefore, you must understand basic sales techniques and the methods you can use to move your clients to a decision and make the sale.

Part of selling is your appearance and the appearance of your work environment. When clients first meet you, they assess you immediately. They judge you by your physical appearance, your body language, and your posture. Dress according to the level of client you wish to attract (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12—Your appearance should be appropriate to the level of clients you want to attract, but you should always look neat and professional.

Your work environment also establishes an immediate impression on clients. You must look confident, friendly, and professional yourself, and your workplace must also show off your expertise and your products.

A salesperson must present a confident, warm presence that makes clients feel welcome and important. Once clients have had an opportunity to assess your workplace, the business of interior decorating can begin. When clients have confidence in you, they'll have confidence in your products and abilities.

Sales training is usually required when a decorator works directly with clients. Sales training consists of suggestions for proper dress as well as successful opening statements to use with clients. Question clients to find out exactly what they're looking for and what specific needs they're expressing. When you ask specific questions, your clients realize that you can meet their needs.

Remember the words *trust* and *confidence.* Establishing trust and confidence in your clients is crucial to the selling process. Once they're comfortable with you, your clients will begin to relax, open up, and let you take the lead. As the process of selection continues, the plan develops and the clients are better able to picture the finished look. Now the salesperson in you must take over to close the sale. You must convince the clients that based upon your mutual choices and the budget, your plan is the best solution.

Decorating Skills

Your use of decorating skills depends on your role in the specific firm for which you're working. The basic skills you learn will come naturally as you gain experience in decorating. You'll learn to plan a space that works well from a design standpoint. You won't have to consciously think about color, furniture placement, and traffic flow because you'll use these skills every day.

Knowing the principles of good design will help you analyze every decorating project you work on.

Watch an experienced decorator develop a color scheme for a room. The decorator uses various patterns and textures within the fabrics chosen for the furniture and windows. Do you think the decorator is thinking about color theory while pulling out fabrics in front of the client? Certainly, but not consciously. In time, this sense of color and pattern comes naturally to the decorator. Yet, it appears the decorator selects these fabrics almost automatically. You'll be amazed at how good you'll become at quickly designing good room layouts and color schemes.

By using color, you create a mood. You're creating an image of an expansive space or a cozy, romantic space. By mixing colors, you create excitement in a room. You use color in every decorating project you do. In every project, you should also be aware of the specific elements of design. These elements are form, line, plane, volume, and shape. Scale, color, texture, pattern, and the use of light are also factors in a decorating scheme.

The principles of design include these terms: *balance, harmony, unity, rhythm, emphasis, focus, contrast, variety,* and *proportion.* Remember that design elements and principles are just words. As you learn their meanings, they'll become the methods you'll use to complete your job. Although it sounds overwhelming, you'll quickly learn which principles or elements to apply for completing an assignment.

Business Practices

Good business practices require organization skills, genuine concern for your clients, and the courage to face problems. If a problem arises, handle it promptly. An unhappy client is the worst kind of advertising for your firm. It costs six times as much to acquire a new client as it does to retain an existing client. Good business practices retain your clients and establish a client base.

Statistics show that repeat customers work with businesses that give them personalized service rather than just the best price. Provide your clients with a good product, a fair price, and outstanding customer service. You'll then be on the road to a successful career.

Your Mission Statement

A *mission statement* is usually expressed in writing. It provides a simple, clear message to your clients concerning your basic professional goals. Here's an example of a mission statement for an interior decorating company: "The goal of this decorating firm is to provide clients with affordable, beautiful interiors." Prominently display your mission statement in your office or showroom. Your mission statement communicates your philosophy. It tells your clients what you do and how you do it.

Gaining Experience

As you gain experience working in your profession, you'll gain product knowledge and increase your abilities. When you begin your career, visit furniture stores, decorator showrooms, and historical homes. Subscribe to some trade magazines. To get practice working with the public, get an entry-level job in an area of decorating. In all cases, be sure to ask questions.

If you have the opportunity, donate your time and expertise to an organization that does *decorator showhouses.* A decorator showhouse is a charity event. It's a home that's decorated by a group of decorators who donate their time, materials, and services to raise money for a cause. Admission is usually charged for the public to view the completed rooms. You can gain free publicity and do a public service at the same time. If you decide to participate in a decorator showhouse, try to do something that you don't normally do. For example, if you decorate living rooms and dining rooms, volunteer to decorate the home office. Figure 13 shows a photo of a room from a decorator's showhouse.

FIGURE 13—This room was decorated for a decorator showhouse. (Courtesy 2004 Society of the Arts Designer Showhouse & Gardens, Allentown, PA; Victorian parlor designed by Ethan Allen Home Interiors)

Working on a decorator showhouse will provide a fresh avenue for your talents, some great publicity, and some new portfolio photographs. When you develop your professional portfolio, you should have as much variety as possible. Your clients should see the entire range of your abilities. When you're first starting out, gain experience by taking as many new challenges as possible to feature your decorating talents.

Statistics indicate that the average worker will have six jobs during his or her lifetime. As an interior decorator, you can explore different areas to gain more experience. Each time you move toward a different job as a decorator, you're gaining valuable knowledge.

Before moving on, please complete *Self-Check 3.*

Self-Check 3

1. A simple statement that indicates your business philosophy is called a _____.

2. In decorating, _____ knowledge involves information regarding types of fabrics, furniture, wallcoverings, and window treatments specific to your specialty area.

3. If you can explain yourself and your decorating ideas clearly to your clients, then you have good _____ skills.

4. *True or False?* The way you arrange and keep your office will help or hinder your ability to make a sale to a client.

5. List three ways you can gain experience in the field of decorating.

   _____

   _____

   _____

Check your answers with those on page 47.

CLIENTS AND THEIR NEEDS

Your clients' needs are the same as the needs of most people. That is, they have the need to socialize, the need to feel good about achievements, the need for acceptance, and other such needs. These needs often coincide with the individuals' values and goals. They're the reasons clients call an interior decorator. These values are reflected in decorating as

- *Products and services.* People want items to reflect their level of prosperity.
- *Accomplishment.* People feel they deserve a reward for their efforts.
- *Beauty.* People want their rooms to look as if they go together.
- *Recognition.* People want their decorating work to be a status symbol.

Who Will Be Your Clients?

Clients today have a wide variety of home fashion needs. A large part of your job will be helping clients choose furnishings and accessories for their homes. You must understand who your clients are and how to serve them. This section of your study unit focuses on the elements that have an impact on decorating.

Individuals or groups of people who are seeking the services of an interior decorator are considered *prospective clients,* or *prospects.* People choose to use a decorator for a variety of reasons. Events occur that may prompt people to seek the services of an interior decorator. Some of these events are

- New construction
- Remodeling
- Relocation
- Change in family
- Wedding

- Birth of a child
- Children moving out
- Promotions
- Graduation
- Retirement

These events mark critical times in which people make major changes. Individuals experiencing these events may even take on new personalities, and they may want to express themselves in a new environment (Figure 14).

FIGURE 14—A lifestyle change like relocation may mean decorating changes.

Your clients will look to you for answers to questions, solutions to problems, and suggestions on products. As a room in a home develops, so does the relationship between your clients and you as the decorator. Once this relationship is established, it can span over years of repeat business.

Wealthy families generally use the support of professionals—lawyers, accountants, landscapers, and decorators. Today, more middle-income families also understand the benefit of using these professionals.

Needs and Desires

Your clients wish to express their values in their interiors. Therefore, they must have the *need* for your products and services. However, they must also have a *desire* to own those products and services—and the financial ability to afford them.

You'll probably discover that your decorating clients come from a variety of different economic and social levels. Some clients may need a great deal of your service, but they may be unable to afford as much as they need. Other clients may be able to afford more help than they need.

The requests that your clients represent to you depend on a number of factors:

- Social status
- The need to make a personal statement
- The need for approval from friends and family
- Comfort level needed or desired
- Funds available to invest in decorating

Identifying Your Clients

One of your first tasks as a decorator will be to identify people who meet the criteria for being prospects. Three factors are important in this determination: financial ability, character traits, and personal preferences.

Financial ability. The major factor in determining prospective clients is their financial ability. As already mentioned, clients may come from a wide range of economic levels. In addition, the wealthy clients may come from old money. These clients have a long history of heritage to uphold. On the other hand, they may have new money and be rising in career and social status. Clients may be accomplished professionals—doctors, lawyers, and in many cases, entrepreneurs—who work hard to create and sustain a quality lifestyle.

Character traits. Your clients' outlook plays a large part in their decorating style. Clients can be

- *Optimistic,* thinking everything looks great
- *Pessimistic,* sure that nothing is ever right
- *Realistic,* seeing everything for what it is—nothing more or less

As a decorator, try to identify where your clients fit into this list. Then, you'll be better able to meet their needs and thereby make a sale.

In addition to these three traits, you may occasionally have clients who are innovators. *Innovators* want to be the first to have something new. On the other hand, your clients may fall into the *mainstream.* These clients wait until a style is proven successful before they'll use it. Of course, your clients can also lag behind. They may wait, be unsure, and ponder your ideas for some time.

Finally, watch out for insecure clients who make you feel the need to take charge. Be careful to consider these clients' needs and desires. Don't impose your own preference on them.

Be sure to pay careful attention to your clients' personalities and act accordingly when you're dealing with them.

Personal preferences. In dealing with clients, you must also determine their personal preferences in styles of interior decorating. There are three environmental preferences you'll find among clients:

- *Elegant* (a tasteful, refined style)
- *Functional* (a no-frills style that serves a purpose)
- *Relaxed* (a casual, comfortable style)

The Bottom Line

The truth is that clients need a decorator to help them define their style and give them the courage to make decisions, as well as avoid costly mistakes. This process needs to be

accomplished with a minimum of inconvenience. It should be done within a reasonable, agreed-upon period. Also, it should stay within an affordable price range.

Watching the Trends

Whenever you think about a design, be sure you consider the current trends. Even if you don't abide by them, your work will always be judged in relation to them, so you have to know what they are. Trends in decorating are so present in the culture that they often affect us in subtle ways. You may not even realize you're following a trend until you notice a photograph in a magazine of something that you thought was your great idea!

The Impact of Change

A *change* is an alteration, a transformation, or a substitution —and changes can occur in many different degrees. A person may choose to use a decorator for a minor change, a major change, or an in-between change. The factors that make change occur in a client's life are influenced by the passage of time.

People employ decorators in building and remodeling projects as well as redecorating, product replacement, and updating projects. The interior decorating industry is fast-growing and always changing. New, updated products require decorators to stay constantly informed in their specialty area.

A number of products have changed due to technology, laws and regulations, and lifestyles. Some of these products fall into the areas of

- Security and safety
- Comfort and style
- Recreation and hobbies
- Physical fitness
- Workstations

For example, the slats on an infant's crib are required by law to be a maximum number of inches apart. If they're any farther apart, an infant's head could become caught between the slats. If you're a decorator who specializes in nurseries, safety is an area in which you must stay informed.

Home offices fall into another area where a decorator can be helpful. In most homes today, computers are an important part of family life. Decorators are expected to work these computer systems into the decorated space. Workstations are as common as entertainment centers. It's essential to know the current merchandise available for these areas.

Today's decorators must help their clients with more than aesthetic choices—that is, choices that focus only on appearance. Decorators must also help their clients make good decisions that satisfy their needs and fulfill their desires.

16,000 Ideas in Images

GetDecorating.com is a site unlike any other. It boasts more than 16,000 photos of actual homes designed, decorated, and landscaped by both architects and interior decorators and designers. When you're brainstorming ideas, you'll find this site to be absolutely priceless! To try it out, go to

http://www.getdecorating.com/

Your Professional Reputation

Your professional reputation as an interior decorator will be based on these principles:

- *Ethics* (a set of moral principles or values)
- *Integrity* (strict adherence to a code of moral or artistic values)
- *Honesty* (adherence to the facts)

Although these principles have different definitions, you can see that they're related. They all include an element of trust. That is, a person with good ethics is a person you can trust. The same is true for a person with integrity and honesty.

People want to work with a decorator they can trust. If you speak to people who have used decorators, you'll find them describing their decorators in a variety of ways:

- "My decorator was somewhat expensive—but worth it."
- "The decorator was so easy to work with."
- "We couldn't have done it without our decorator."
- "My decorator helped me get everything I wanted."
- "My decorator always came through for me."
- "My decorator did what he promised to do."

These are great comments a decorator would love to have clients say. On the other hand, a decorator wouldn't want clients to say things like this:

- "The job was way over budget."
- "We were months behind schedule."
- "My decorator didn't listen to what I was saying."
- "I didn't think I could trust my decorator."

Your reputation is greatly determined by what your clients say about you. The business of decorating is built on repeat customers and referrals, and referrals usually come from satisfied customers.

Today's consumers, more than any other time in history, are savvy about their purchasing decisions. This product sophistication and knowledge shouldn't intimidate a competent decorator. Your product knowledge and growing resource base will help build your confidence with every passing year.

In the 1940s and 1950s, decorators and manufacturers dictated styles. Marketing wasn't needed, because consumers bought whatever the manufacturers produced. Consumers didn't influence the products; manufacturers and decorators did. Rooms had the personality of the decorators, not the clients. People bought everything from one store, and followed the color trends set at the time.

Today, the reverse is true. People no longer buy the *product;* they buy the *benefit* of that product. The demand for benefit in today's home fashions is greater than ever. A benefit for your clients is something that fulfills their needs and desires. A benefit may be the need for privacy, ease of maintenance, comfort, entertainment, beauty, and so on.

You should consider your services and products for features, functions, and benefits. *Features* emphasize the most important part of your products or service. *Function* tells the client what they do. Benefits allow the client to determine why they want or need them.

Finally, your reputation can be determined by your own attitude toward your clients and their decorating problems. Maintain a positive attitude. Consider your clients' problems as your personal challenge. Be determined to solve them for your clients. Having a positive attitude can also help you to enjoy researching and finding available options, presenting the ideas to your clients, ordering the products, and getting them installed correctly. A decorator with a positive attitude never gives up (Figure 15).

FIGURE 15—A decorator with a positive attitude will gradually establish a good personal reputation.

Self-Check 4

1. List at least five events that might cause a person to seek the services of an interior decorator.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. *True or False?* Pessimistic clients would probably be happy with any room you design for them.

3. People want to work with a decorator they can _____.

4. *True or False?* The business of decorating is built on customer referrals.

5. How can laws affect product changes?

   _____

   _____

Check your answers with those on page 48.

PRACTICE EXERCISES

To become acquainted with the field of interior decorating, take some time to complete these three Practice Exercises. There are no right or wrong answers to these exercises. Use them to help you become familiar with the field of decorating and to determine your strengths in decorating. *Note:* Do not submit your answers to these exercises. They're for your benefit only.

Exercise 1: Where Decorators Work

After you've read this study unit, look for places where decorators are employed in your area. Visit department stores, home improvement centers, wall covering showrooms, and furniture stores. Find two examples of decorators working in your area. On a separate sheet of paper, give a brief job description for each decorator.

Exercise 2: Identify Your Decorating Strengths

Using the questionnaire provided below, determine the decorating skills you may already have. If you don't have any experience in a particular area, don't worry. That's why you're taking a course in decorating.

Experience

Place a check mark next to any area of decorating experience you have.

_____ I currently work in the field of decorating.

_____ I've worked in a retail sales environment such as a department store, a home improvement store, or a furniture store.

_____ I've worked in a trade-only environment.

These areas give you a general idea of what you may have experience in already, and may provide you with an idea of where you want your career in decorating.

Decorating Skills

Place a check mark next to each project you've completed.

_____ I've selected colors for a room.

_____ I've arranged furniture in a room.

_____ I've selected paint for a room, house, trim, or some other decorating element.

_____ I've used more than one color paint in a room.

_____ I've selected a color scheme for a room.

_____ I've selected window treatments.

_____ I've chosen furniture for a room.

_____ I've chosen rugs or floor treatments.

_____ I've selected kitchen cabinets.

_____ I've selected bathroom or kitchen fixtures.

_____ I've chosen artwork for a room.

_____ I've made a decorative object such as a wreath or a painting.

_____ I've chosen a lighting fixture or a ceiling fan.

_____ I've chosen wall coverings for a room.

_____ I've completed one of these projects myself.

These are just a few of the countless areas of interior decorating you may already have experience in. These areas can bring back a particularly enjoyable time when you selected items in an area, and may give you a clue as to your specialty area! On the other hand, there may be a particular decorating aspect you dislike. This questionnaire helps you define your strengths to help you determine what you want to do in decorating.

You've probably realized you've accomplished much more than you had previously thought. You're now on the road to a career in decorating!

Exercise 3: Begin a Color Sampler

A *color sampler* is a collection of color samples of various kinds. As a student of interior decorating and then as an interior decorator, you can use your sampler to help you create color schemes.

Begin now to start your sampler. You can collect paint samples, wallcovering samples, and color samples cut from magazines, catalogs, and ads you receive in the mail. You can also collect swatches of material in various fabrics and textures.

NOTES

ANSWERS

Self-Check 1

1. False
2. Questionnaire
3. Limitations regarding budget, space, and time
4. friends
5. portfolio
6. historic period

Self-Check 2

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. DIY (do-it-yourself)
5. builders, decorators, designers, retailers, architects
6. royalty

Self-Check 3

1. mission statement
2. product
3. communication
4. True
5. Work in the field; subscribe to trade magazines; and visit furniture stores, showhouses, and historical homes

Self-Check 4

1. Any five of the following events are correct: new-home construction, remodeling, relocation, change in family, wedding, birth of a child, children moving out, promotion, and graduation.
2. False
3. trust
4. True
5. Safety considerations may lead to laws and regulations that require certain specifications in furniture. This study unit gives the example of the slats on cribs for infants.

Decorating Today

EXAMINATION NUMBER

01202100

Whichever method you use in submitting your exam answers to the school, you must use the number above.

For the quickest test results, go to http://www.takeexamsonline.com

When you feel confident that you have mastered the material in this study unit, go to http://www.takeexamsonline.com and submit your answers online. If you don't have access to the Internet, you can phone in or mail in your exam. Submit your answers for this examination as soon as you complete it. *Do not wait until another examination is ready.*

Questions 1–20: Select the one best answer to each question.

1. In what decades was decorating style dictated by decorators and manufacturers?

   A. 1890s and 1910s
   B. 1920s and 1930s
   C. 1940s and 1950s
   D. 1980s and 1990s

2. A general document that explains payments, deliveries, and proposed work is a

   A. contract.
   B. questionnaire.
   C. portfolio.
   D. marketing plan.

3. Historically, who originally influenced the style and trends of art, architecture, furniture, and fashion?

   A. Interior designers
   B. Upper class
   C. Architects
   D. Artists

4. Which one of the following areas falls within the domain of an interior designer?

   A. Developing a color scheme
   B. Selecting artwork for a client
   C. Knowing building codes
   D. Drawing a floor plan

Examination

5. Your client has an extensive home computer system. He wants it in his living room because he wants to be with his family while he works. You develop a decorating plan that

   A. places the computer station in an adjoining room.
   B. doesn't allow for the computer because it doesn't fit your color scheme.
   C. removes family seating for a fabulous computer station.
   D. incorporates the computer and the family activities.

6. You live in an area of predominantly wealthy people. As a decorator, you would like to attract these people as clients. On a first interview with one of these clients, how should you dress?

   A. The way you would expect this client to dress
   B. Casually for the first interview
   C. Very formally to show the client you care
   D. In a manner that best suits your own style and comfort

7. What is one similarity between interior decorators and interior designers?

   A. Both are trained professionals.
   B. Both must be licensed by their state or province.
   C. Both prepare working drawings for interior construction.
   D. Both must have at least a bachelor's degree.

8. Decorators working in new-home construction help clients select

   A. siding.
   B. brick.
   C. window treatments.
   D. shingles.

9. Which type of client is *most likely* to accept what you offer at face value?

   A. Innovator
   B. Realist
   C. Optimist
   D. Pessimist

10. Marco Polo discovered the _____ influence on his travels.

    A. Egyptian
    B. Renaissance
    C. Colonial
    D. Asian

11. What organization is specifically related to the interior decorating profession?

    A. ASID
    B. NCIDQ
    C. C.I.D.
    D. CFID

12. The average worker has _____ jobs during his or her career years.

    A. 3
    B. 4
    C. 6
    D. 12

13. Average clients change their interiors every _____ years.

A. 2
B. 7
C. 15
D. 30

14. When should you begin to prepare your own personal interior decorating portfolio?

A. When you work on your first decorating job
B. While you're studying to become a decorator
C. After you complete all your decorating courses
D. After you've had a few years of experience in the decorating field

15. What tool can you use during the initial interview to gather information from a prospective client?

A. Contract
B. Portfolio
C. Questionnaire
D. Vignette

16. Your client is expecting a baby. She hires you to decorate the nursery. She wants to use an elaborate crib that belonged to her grandmother. What should be your suggestion to her?

A. Use the crib and any other antique furniture to create a quaint atmosphere.
B. Check the size of the required bedding before deciding to use the crib.
C. Determine if the crib meets today's safety standards.
D. Buy a new crib regardless of your client's budget.

17. Another name for businesses in the trade-only industry is

A. contractors.
B. architects.
C. retailers.
D. suppliers.

18. When you present a decorating plan to a client, what is one element you should emphasize?

A. Your credentials
B. How each choice fits their needs and budget
C. The color scheme you've chosen
D. The importance of a large deposit on the job

19. Who is dictating the styles used in interior decorating today?

A. Interior designers
B. Architects
C. Interior decorators
D. Consumers

20. A decorator showhouse is a

A. display of your merchandise.
B. home decorated by a group of decorators.
C. home that you rent to display seasonal merchandise.
D. type of elaborate portfolio.